

**POLICY NUMBER:** 4.00.500**EFFECTIVE DATE:** 9/7/21**TITLE:** Use of State Resources**SUPERSEDES:** 8/27/21**APPROVED:**

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**PURPOSE**

This policy establishes guidelines for the use of state resources by Washington State Investment Board (herein referred to as Agency) employees. It is the personal responsibility of each Agency employee to understand Washington ethics laws and Agency policies. Employees must collectively maintain the highest standards of honesty, integrity, impartiality, in the conduct and performance of official duties. By doing so, we strengthen public confidence in the Agency and promote public interest.

**POLICY**

Proper stewardship of state resources, including but not limited to funds, facilities, equipment, property, office supplies, and time is a responsibility of all state employees. Accordingly, state employees may not use state resources for private benefit or gain, including the benefit or gain of others unless allowed by law.

**State Resources**

This policy applies to, but is not limited to, the following types of state resources:

- Public trust funds.
- Agency operating funds.
- Staff time.
- Telephones - landline and cellular.
- SCAN authorization codes.
- Agency assigned credit cards.
- Personal computers, laptops, tablets, smartphones, printers, and software.
- Data systems and databases.
- Agency records, data, and information in all media formats.
- FAX and photocopying machines.
- State vehicles.
- Office facilities.
- Small office equipment (calculators, label writers/makers, etc.).
- Office supplies.

**PERMITTED USES****Use of State Resources for Official State Purpose**

Any use of state resources reasonably related to the conduct of official state duties for official state purpose is allowed. "Official state purpose" includes use of state resources to conduct official duties, activities reasonably related to the conduct of official state duties, activities related to state employment, and activities otherwise allowed by law.

Examples of official state purposes include the following:

1. Approved training and career development.
2. Approved membership or participation in professional associations that enhance job-related skills of the employee.

3. Attendance at state or agency sponsored health, safety, or diversity fairs.
4. Management of or access to state-provided or state-sponsored benefits, including health, deferred compensation, insurance, retirement, or the Employee Assistance Program.
5. Searching and applying for state jobs subject to de minimis use, including taking an examination or participating in an interview.
  - De minimis use applies to an employee's time as well as a state-provided computer, telephone, internet, or e-mail system (de minimis use is detailed below in Permitted personal use of state resources).
  - The Director of Human Resources (HR Director) can authorize use above de minimis on a case-by-case basis. Approval must be received in advance of the use.
  - The use of state time for taking an examination or participating in an interview, including reasonable travel time, must be approved by the employee's supervisor in advance.
  - The use of state resources to search and apply for jobs outside Washington state government is not allowed even on a de minimis basis.
6. Placement of nongovernmental web page links on an agency web site for official state purposes, as long as the use does not violate RCW [42.52.180](#), Use of public resources for political campaigns.
7. Combined Fund Drive activities. Assigned employees may participate in activities to carry out Washington State's Combined Fund Drive within the following limits:
  - HR Director review and approval must be obtained in advance.
  - Resources used are limited to basic supplies and equipment, such as computers and copy machines.
  - All other employees may participate in Combined Fund Drive activities if the use of state resources is de minimis.

### **Agency Approved Use**

The Washington State Executive Ethics Board requires agencies to establish a policy to authorize limited use of state time and resources for certain activities. The following uses are authorized for Agency employees, subject to the identified guidelines:

#### Charitable Activities

Employees may support and promote charitable activities. Certain activities need no approval, including the intermittent or seasonal sale of candy bars, cookies, flowers, fruit, wrapping papers, entertainment discount books or other similar items that benefit a non-profit organization. Employees should avoid, however, soliciting co-workers directly and opt for voluntary participation.

HR Director approval is required for other activities, such as adopt-a-family activities, food drives, bake sales, Inter-Agency Committee of State Employed Women (ICSEW) collection drives, and lunches by donation. Other activities include solicitation of employees to assist a staff member who has suffered an unforeseen illness or family tragedy.

All charitable activities are subject to the following limits:

- The employee must use regular breaks, lunch hour, or annual leave for the activity.
- The activity cannot interfere with the performance of official state business.
- Use of basic supplies and equipment, such as computers, email, and copy machines is not allowed unless approved by the HR Director.

- Posters or notices may only be placed on bulletin boards and table surfaces in break rooms or coffee rooms.

In all instances, supervisors should avoid soliciting employees under their influence or supervision.

#### Organizational Effectiveness

Use of state resources is allowed for organizational effectiveness when the activity relates to the agency's mission and encompasses activities that augment the agency's ability to perform its mission. The agency encourages activities that foster employee development and contribute to diversity, networking, and agency cohesiveness. Organizational effectiveness activities can occur during regular work hours but must not interfere with an individual's regularly assigned duties. The HR Director must pre-approve all organizational activities and may limit the use of state resources. Volunteer activities associated with organizational effectiveness activities must occur outside regular work hours unless leave is submitted or HR Director approval is obtained.

#### Other Activities

Collegial functions, such as retirement or wedding/baby showers are allowed without HR Director approval. Other celebrations, however, require HR Director approval.

All other functions are subject to the following limits:

- The employee must use regular breaks, lunch hour, or annual leave for the activity.
- The activity cannot interfere with the performance of official state business.
- Limited use of basic supplies and equipment, such as computers and copiers.
- Use of a conference room cannot interfere with official state business.
- Employees may use limited staff time and resources (computer, copier/printer, and office supplies) to participate in State or intermittent Agency sponsored health activities (e.g., vaccinations, health screenings, or recording participation in an agency or PEBB sponsored wellness program such as SmartHealth).

#### **Permitted Personal Use of State Resources**

This subsection applies to any use of state resources not included in the sections above.

Unless otherwise prohibited, an employee may use state resources for personal purposes within de minimis limits. All conditions listed below must be met for the use to be considered de minimis.

1. There is little or no cost to the state.
2. Any use is brief.
3. Any use occurs infrequently.
4. The use does not interfere with the performance of any employee's official duties.
5. The use does not compromise the security or integrity of state property, information systems, or software.
6. The use is not for the purpose of conducting an outside business, in furtherance of private employment, or to realize a private financial gain.
7. The use is not for supporting, promoting the interests of, or soliciting for an outside organization or group.

#### **PROHIBITED USES**

The use of state resources for the following activities is strictly prohibited and no de minimis use is allowed:

- Any use for the purpose of conducting an outside business, private employment, or other activity conducted for personal gain.
- Any use for the purpose or supporting, promoting the interests of, or soliciting for an outside organization or group, unless approve by an agency head.
- Any use for the purpose of assisting a campaign for the election of a person to an office or for the promotion or opposition to a ballot proposition.
- Any use that is otherwise prohibited by federal or state law, or Agency policy.

**No Expectation of Privacy**

There is no right to privacy when using state resources. Technologies such as electronic mail, facsimile transmissions, the internet, and voicemail create a record and cannot be considered private. Such records may be subject to disclosure under the Public Records Act or may be disclosed for audit or state operational or management purposes.

**POLICY REVIEW**

The Chief Executive Officer shall review this policy every three (3) years to ensure that it remains relevant and appropriate.

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